



Natural Resources Conservation Service  
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To be sent via E-mail

October 1, 2003

MINNESOTA BULLETIN NO. 290- 4- 1

SUBJECT: INV – NASS SURVEY OF FARMERS

Purpose. To inform field offices about the NASS survey and visits to field offices.

Expiration Date. September 30, 2004.

In conjunction with the National Resources Inventory (NRI), the Conservation Effects Assessment Project (CEAP) is an initiative designed to quantify and estimate the outcomes and environmental benefits of our conservation programs. NRCS has entered into a partnership with the National Agricultural Statistical Service (NASS), the Farm Service Agency (FSA), and the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) to conduct this study.

Beginning in October, NASS will be conducting a survey of farmers in 81 Minnesota counties (see attached list, nriceap\_st\_co\_counts03). Some field office support will be needed, usually less than 2 hours per county.

NASS enumerators will be visiting NRCS field offices during the period from October to December 2003 to obtain specific information about: (1) whether or not the selected NRI point/field has a conservation plan; (2) what programs are associated with the conservation plan; (3) what year the conservation plan (or plans) was originally approved; (4) what is the year of the most recent update to the plan; (5) what resource concerns are addressed by the plan; and (6) what are the structural practices included in the plan.

All farmer interviews will be arranged and conducted by NASS enumerators (not at the field office). Enumerator visits to NRCS field offices will occur concurrently with farmer interviews. Enumerators have been instructed by NASS to set up appointments for data collection prior to arriving at NRCS field office locations. When collecting conservation planning data in the field office, the enumerators will be providing operator name, FSA Field and Tract number, and aerial photography to NRCS staff to help identify field locations and assist with accessing the proper field office records.

Field office support is an important part of the partnership effort to evaluate the outcomes and benefits of USDA conservation programs.

The following products and information regarding the NRI-CEAP effort have been attached to this bulletin to provide NRCS field office staffs with a general project overview and a better understanding of the important role that they will be playing in helping to gather data needed to evaluate the environmental benefits of conservation programs:

- A brochure prepared by NRCS and NASS (**Conservation\_Brochure.pdf**) that describes the survey and the need for farmer assistance
- The last two pages of the actual questionnaire (**03\_ceap\_qnaire.NRCS\_pages.pdf**) that list the questions that field office staff will help NASS enumerators answer about program involvement, resource concerns, and structural practices
- A comprehensive NRI-CEAP project paper (**CEAP paper-8-14.doc**) that describes the purpose, scope, and design of the project
- An Excel spreadsheet (**nriceap\_st\_co\_counts03**) that lists all of the counties by state plus the number of PSU's in the county for the NRI CEAP study.

If you have any questions about the study or the field office responsibilities, please contact Susan Ploetz, Resources Inventory Specialist, [susan.ploetz@mn.usda.gov](mailto:susan.ploetz@mn.usda.gov), (651)602-7888.

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State Conservationist

Attachments

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